

TechTown Innovation Campus Implementation Pathway + Resource Needs August 29, 2018

Background

TechTown was founded in 2000 by Wayne State University (WSU), Henry Ford Health System and General Motors with the lofty goal of energizing an entire district through the support of tech-based spinoffs from the university. That goal wasn't exactly realized, but along the way our team did discover that incubation and acceleration strategies for tech companies could help strengthen neighborhood small businesses and commercial corridors across Detroit. Only the first of several envisioned sites across the neighborhood, the current TechTown building, has fully realized that vision over the last several years in a five-story building that serves as an entrepreneurial hub, housing our coworking community, meeting and event space, and numerous businesses working across sectors to drive progress in Detroit. In 2013, with an eye towards developing a more comprehensive place-based strategy to support innovation, Sasaki Associates was hired to develop a cohesive district plan.

Catalyzed by Wayne State University's purchase of the Industry Innovation Center (I2C, formerly NextEnergy Center) building in May 2018, the TechTown neighborhood is poised to realize the vision crafted at its inception nearly two decades ago, and reaffirmed by the Sasaki plan more recently, of becoming the focal point of tech-based entrepreneurship and innovation in the Detroit region.

Over the next two and a half years, WSU and TechTown will transform the site of the I2C building and its connection to the TechTown building across the street into the Central Core of an Innovation Campus. As outlined in the Sasaki plan, the Central Core will be the neighborhood's main gathering space and a physical manifestation of the district's innovation potential. WSU has already invested over \$6 million in the acquisition of the I2C building and site [REDACTED].

The Neighborhood

The area around TechTown is an ideal location for innovation, called home by WSU, Henry Ford Health System and the College for Creative Studies. The surrounding neighborhoods host office, housing and retail space, all in close proximity to local and regional transportation including the QLINE, MoGo, DDOT and Amtrak. The neighborhood is dense and walkable—ideal for collaboration—and includes:

- **TechTown Building:** 130,000 SF of lab, office, meeting and events space, plus Detroit's largest co-working community.
- **Industry Innovation Center (I2C):** 45,000 SF of office, events and demonstration space including high bay, reinforced concrete floored labs, a research pavilion, electric vehicle infrastructure and alternative fuel platform.
- **I-Blo:** 200,000 SF of lab and clinical space dedicated to studying and eliminating urban health disparities
- **6001 Cass:** 80,000 SF of high tech office space being developed by The Platform
- **LOT 11:** Innovative new housing, retail and parking being developed by The Platform.

